

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A tilt steering apparatus for a tilt adjustable steering column, comprising:

a fixed bracket fixed to a body of a vehicle, and having side plates;

a tilt bracket fixed to the steering column and having side plates positioned to slide along the side plates of the fixed bracket at a time of tilt adjustment;

a supporting shaft passing through respective insertion holes of the side plates of the fixed bracket and of the side plates of the tilt bracket;

a lock lever rotatable around an axis of said supporting shaft and in a locking direction to lock the steering column in an adjusted tilt position, and being rotatable around the axis of said supporting shaft and in a locking releasing direction; and

a cam surface and a cam follower which are relatively rotated to cause an edge of the cam follower to be brought into sliding, and non-rolling contact with the cam surface as the lock lever is rotated,

the cam surface including a locking position in which the steering column is locked in the adjusted tilt position, a releasing position in which the steering column is unlocked so as to be free to be adjusted to a desired tilt position, and an intermediate position disposed between the locking position and the releasing position, the intermediate position including a plurality of slopes including at least two linear and adjacent slopes corresponding to a rotation stroke position of the lock lever, the at least two slopes sloping upward in a same direction and being connected together at a protruding portion that projects toward the cam follower,

the cam surface pressing the edge of the cam follower as the lock lever is rotated in the locking direction so that the side plates of the fixed bracket and the side plates of the tilt bracket are pressed against each other, resulting in the steering column being locked at the adjusted tilt position, wherein

the cam follower is moved in a first direction relative to the cam surface when the lock lever is rotated in the locking direction,

the at least two slopes slope upward in the first direction, a second one of the two slopes being gentler than a first one of the two slopes, and

the cam follower slides from the first slope of the cam surface to the second slope thereof when the lock lever is rotated in the locking direction.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The tilt steering apparatus according to claim 1 2, wherein

the plurality of slopes of the cam surface includes a third slope which slopes upward in the first direction, the third slope being gentler than the second slope, and

the third slope corresponds to a rear of a stroke in the locking direction of the lock lever, and

the cam follower successively slides toward the first, second and third slopes of the cam surface in this order when the lock lever is rotated in the locking direction.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The tilt steering apparatus according to claim 1 2,
wherein

the plurality of slopes of the cam surface includes an inverse slope which slopes
downward in the first direction,

the inverse slope corresponds to a rear of a stroke in the locking direction of the
lock lever, and

the cam follower slides toward the first and second slopes and the inverse slope
of the cam surface in this order when the lock lever is rotated in the locking direction.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The tilt steering apparatus according to claim
1, further comprising:

means for increasing an operating torque of the lock lever at a front of a stroke
in the locking releasing direction of the lock lever, and

wherein the cam surface and the cam follower constitute means for increasing
the operating torque of the lock lever.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The tilt steering apparatus according to claim
5, wherein

the cam follower is moved in a first direction relative to the cam surface when
the lock lever is rotated in the locking direction,

the cam surface includes an inverse slope which slopes downward in the first
direction, and

the inverse slope of the cam surface corresponds to a front of a stroke in the locking releasing direction of the lock lever.

Claim 7 (Canceled).

Claim 8 (Canceled).

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The tilt steering apparatus according to claim 5, wherein

the cam surface includes an area corresponding to a front of a stroke in the locking releasing direction of the lock lever, and a recess concaved by providing a step in the area.

Claim 10 (Original). The tilt steering apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the cam follower includes a cam follower surface which is brought into contact with the cam surface, and

the cam follower surface includes a projection which is engaged with the recess of the cam surface in correspondence with a rear of a stroke in the locking direction of the lock lever.

Claim 11 (Original). The tilt steering apparatus according to claim 9, wherein an area, corresponding to the front of the stroke in the locking releasing direction of the lock lever, of the cam surface includes a portion having no slope.

Claim 12 (Canceled).

Claim 13 (Canceled).